

1924

## The genesis of New Port Richey

Elroy McKendree Avery

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The Avery Library and Historical Society  
New Port Richey, Florida

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PUBLICATION NO. 3

The Genesis  
of  
New Port Richey

PRICE 50c



# New Port Richey Volunteer Fire Department

Organized April 1, 1922

J. W. CLARK, JR., Chief

C. W. BARNETT, Treasurer

This department, together with the chemical truck, apparatus, and engine house, were made possible by the generous contributions of the following

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The  
**Avery Library and Historical Society**  
New Port Richey, Florida

PUBLICATION NO. 3  
SEPTEMBER, 1924

**The Genesis**  
OF  
**New Port Richey**



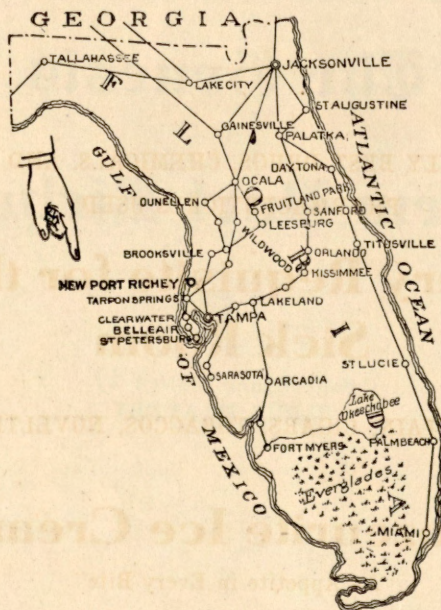
Compiled and Edited by  
ELROY M. AVERY



## Foreword

The chief purpose of this little book is to tell where and what New Port Richey is and how it came to be. This purpose permits a very brief outline of the early events leading up to this end; any one who desires to fill in the gaps left in the present narrative will find abundant material, easily accessible—New Port Richey has a good library, open to the public.

New Port Richey is in Pasco County, on the Florida West Coast. It is pleasantly situated on the Cotee River (an abbreviation of the Indian name, Pithlachascotee) and about two miles from the Gulf of Mexico. It is 212 miles from Jacksonville, 48 miles from St. Petersburg, 36 miles from Tampa, and 8 miles from Tarpon Springs. It is most easily reached by railway via Tampa or Tarpon Springs. Good paved roads from New Port Richey to St. Petersburg, or to Tampa and beyond make automobile travel easy and pleasant.



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# FRIERSON'S PHARMACY

FRED C. FRIERSON, Proprietor

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PRESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT

In charge of

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ONLY BEST DRUGS, CHEMICALS, AND  
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**Every Requisite for the  
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**When you are ready to  
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Yours for REAL SERVICE,

**GERBEN M. DeVRIES**

**POSTMASTER**

**New Port Richey, Florida**



ELROY M. AVERY, Pres.

CHAS. M. PRICE, Vice-Pres.

R. E. GASKILL, Sec'y., Treas., and Mgr.

## **I can't help thinking that the Florida West Coast is much like the Garden of Eden**

was before its inhabitants disobeyed their Lord. Even after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and the man threw the blame upon the woman, as the men folks have done ever since, Adam lived to the ripe old age of nine hundred and thirty years, but he never knew how much easier life might have been for him if he had had access to such an arsenal of helpful equipment as that now maintained at New Port Richey by the

## **Cotee Hardware Co.**



# Gulf Utilities Company

Operated to serve the best interests of

NEW PORT RICHEY

---

## Ice and Electricity *Plus Service*

---

This concern may be counted upon further to aid in the upbuilding  
of the town.

---

## We Sing a Song of Music the Whole Year Around

Whether it is Pianos, Victrolas, Player Pianos, Records, Music  
Rolls, Music Books, or anything else found in a music store.

And you will find our price right with quality considered.

Pianos to rent, by the week or season. Pianos moved or pianos  
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## Dixie Music Shop

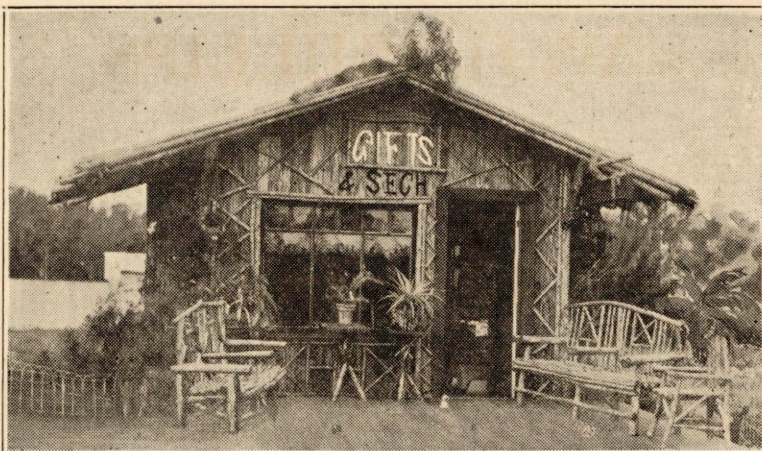
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New Port Richey, Fla.

HH



# The Sally Shoppe



THE HOME OF SALLY BLOSSOMS

The SALLY SHOPPE is a veritable flower garden, a formal garden with beds of the most entrancing bloom.

One bed contains pinks and blues for babies. Bewitching caps to frame the smiling faces, and the little bows are pinned to the caps with

## Sally Blossom Pins

Another bed has rows of captivating sweaters in all the shades of flowerdom, and the crisp, lacey collars are pinned with

## Sally Blossom Sweater Pins

In the long bed on the right grow post card flowers in all the known hues, tiny gifts boxed with SALLY BLOSSOMS, handkerchiefs whose corners bloom with colors prominent in the Southland, SALLY BLOSSOM boxes and bottles with the perfumes imprisoned, and here, there and everywhere peep tiny SALLY BLOSSOMS on pins, bracelets, pendants, and the hundred trifles that grace our girls today, while unstanding like great sunflowers, the GIFT SHOPPE HATS, adorned with SALLY BLOSSOMS make their persistent appeal.

HH



# W. H. PHILLIPS

LARGEST ASSORTMENT OF

Staple and Fancy  
Groceries

IN THE CITY



## Our Meat Market

IS AS GOOD AS THE BEST

We have our own REFRIGERATION PLANT ass-  
suring the best meats at all times.



W. H. PHILLIPS, Proprietor



# Parkes Clothing Co.

The Up-To-Date Store

SELZ AND ENDICOTT-

JOHNSON SHOES

For Men, Women and Children

HOLEPROOF HOSIERY

A superior hose for all members  
of the family.

## Dry Goods, Notions, etc.

Our line of Men's and Boys' Hats and Caps is of the highest quality and prices are right.

We carry a complete line of well known Furnishings for the entire family.

Our line of school supplies is complete, and prices reasonable.

Our Motto is to "Sell Only First Class, Up-to-date Merchandise, and Satisfaction Guaranteed."

Our desire is to give New Port Richey the Best Store of its kind in Florida, and we solicit your assistance.

(LADIES' REST ROOM)



## HOW NEW PORT RICHEY HAPPENED

By THE EDITOR

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Then man and woman were made and, with their offspring, occupied the earth. Few of them lived up to the level of their possibilities and so a flood was sent for their punishment and then a Saviour for their redemption. In the ninth century after the coming of Christ, Norwegians settled in Iceland which lies on the northern way from Europe to America; they soon discovered Greenland and formed two settlements on its west coast. A glance at the map of the north Atlantic will show how easily this discovery might be made; from the middle of the channel between Iceland and Greenland, land may be seen on either hand. In the year 1000 (or thereabouts) Leif Ericson, with thirty-five companions, sailed southward from their homes in Greenland and landed on an island. According to the "inspired identifiers of localities," they were now somewhere on the New England coast, but at what precise locality no ordinary mortal knows. Delighted with the climate, they sailed between the island and the mainland, went up a river, went ashore, and spent the winter there, the founders of "Vinland," the adventurous pioneers of American discovery. The story is told in detail in certain sagas or Scandanavian legends, treasured in the royal library of Copenhagen. They had long been known to Scandanavian scholars, but were first made known to the world in general by publication in 1837. These stories bear internal evidence of trustworthiness, have been corroborated by early and almost contemporary Icelandic historians, and confirmed by the researches of modern explorers and investigators. "We cannot deal fairly with American history and ignore these picturesque and romantic legends." After varied experiences, Vinland was abandoned, and in the next century it drifted into oblivion.

In the latter part of the thirteenth century, the wondrous story that the Venetian, Marco Polo, told of Cathay aroused the curiosity and kindled the avarice of western Europe, and Prince Henry of Portugal (1394-1460) proposed to turn the profitable commerce of the East from the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to the broad bosom of the Atlantic. The mariners whom he enlisted explored the west coast of Africa, part of the definite program of advancing thus to establish a route to Asia. The age of maritime discovery (1492-1522) was thus ushered in.



The story of the Italian, Christopher Columbus, and his discovery of America is too well known to call for more than mere mention here. His fleet of three little vessels sailed from Palos in Spain on the third of August 1492. In the following October (October 12, old style; October 21, new style) he landed on Watling Island, one of the Bahamas. He then thought that he had discovered a new route to India. He knew not, nor did he ever know that he had found a world and not a way. Spain was disposed to make the most of her good fortune, and other voyages by the great discoverer and by other persons, some of whom he had trained, followed. Some of these later voyages were due to private enterprise; some were clandestine. After the death of Queen Isabella, Columbus was neglected by the court and spent his few remaining days in poverty and gloom. He died in the city of Valladolid, Spain, on the twentieth of May, 1506, in complete obscurity.

In 1509, Juan Ponce de Leon, who had sailed with Columbus on his second voyage, was made governor of Porto Rico, and, when his commission was revoked, fed his fancy on the Indian story of Bimini, an island "in the which there is a continual spring of running water of such marvelous virtue that, the water thereof being drunk, perhaps with some diet, maketh old men young." In 1512, a royal grant authorized him "to proceed to discover and settle the island of Bimini"; he was to be its governor for life. On an Easter Sunday (March 27, 1513), the adventurers discovered the mainland along which they coasted northward until the second of April when they landed. The Spanish name for Easter Sunday is Pasqua Florida (the Feast of Flowers) and so Ponce called the land of luxuriant beauty Florida. The landing was probably made between the site of St. Augustine and the mouth of the St. John's River. Of course, they took possession of the country in the name of Spain. Thus the East Coast got the first send-off; a handicap that the West Coast has not yet wholly overcome. Thence the party sailed southward, exploring the coast and looking for the fabulous fountain. They doubled the cape and ran up the Florida west coast until it trended westward and possibly beyond. Thus they skirted the peninsula of Pinellas and passed by the mouth of "the beautiful Cotee River." In August, they set sail homeward.

In 1520, Panfilo de Narvaez was sent with a fleet and twelve hundred Spanish soldiers to arrest Hernando Cortes, the somewhat disobedient Spanish conqueror of Mexico. With three hundred men, Cortes marched to meet his white pursuers and, in a night attack, carried everything be-



fore him, captured his wounded rival, and took possession of his fleet. Narvaez was soon released and returned to Spain; most of his men enlisted under Cortes. In 1526, Narvaez secured a commission to explore and conquer Florida, a territory that extended westward as far as Texas. In the following year, with five ships and six hundred men, including many of wealth and gentle birth, as well as mechanics, laborers, and Franciscan friars, he sailed from Spain. The winter was spent in the West Indies. In March, 1528, the fleet sailed from Cuba and was storm-driven upon the Florida west coast. In April it was in the Bahai de la Cruz, which has been variously "identified" as Charlotte Harbor, Tampa Bay and Apalachee Bay. As if to settle this triangular controversy, a large advertising sign on the fine paved way that runs from Tampa toward New Port Richey assures passers-by that Narvaez and his men going northward crossed the highway at that place. Of course, this statement would not have been given such publicity without determinable research. I, therefore, assume that it was on the shore of Tampa Bay that Narvaz landed most of his men and, with the usual formula, took possession of the country. After sending three of his ships (one had been lost) to follow the coast and to meet him at an uncertain rendezvous, he began his disastrous march, possibly crossing the Cotee River (you can't prove that he didn't), and seeking first for Apalachee, a city of plenty and of gold. The expedition is memorable chiefly for the sufferings of those who died and the rare adventures of the four survivors. In May, 1536, Cabeza de Vaca, as self-possessed a hero as ever graced a fiction, with three companions, found some of their countrymen at Culiacan in the Mexican province of Sinaloa. They had crossed North America from the Florida Peninsula to the Gulf of California—the pioneer pathfinders of the continent.\*

In 1531, Pizarro sailed from Panama and began his blood-stained conquest of Peru, and the exaction of the rich ransom vainly paid by the inca. About the time that Cabeza de Vaca returned in poverty from Mexico, Hernando de Soto came in wealth from Pizarro's school, won a wife of noble birth, and received a commission that made him governor of Cuba, with authority to conquer the ill-defined country described in the patent that, in 1526, had been granted to Narvaez. In April, 1538, De

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\*For detailed accounts of the fatalistic cruelties of Narvaez and the sufferings and adventures of his men, or of the following brief story of the De Soto expedition, see Avery's History of the United States and Its People, Vol. 1, Chapter 19.



Soto sailed from San Lucar with six hundred Spaniards "in doublets and cassocks of silk," and Portuguese in neat armor. In addition to his soldiers he had "horses and bloodhounds for conquest, mechanics and materials for colonization, and priests with sacerdotal paraphernalia for the Christianization of the natives. Everything that experience in invasion could suggest was provided, even to chains for captives and a drove of hogs." After a year of festivity and preparation, the expedition sailed from Havana in May, 1539. Before the end of the month, De Soto landed his troops at Tampa Bay, sent his ships back lest they should tempt to a retreat, and marched northward; possibly he crossed the Cotee River. "The governor was very fond of the sport of killing Indians," and his advance was opposed at every step. Lured on by hope of finding gold mines and determined to discover a rival for Peru, De Soto marched his men as far north as North Carolina and, by a devious route, as far west as Arkansas, crossing the Mississippi River in the vicinity of Memphis. After three years of wandering, fighting and suffering, the discouraged De Soto died (May, 1542), and in silence was buried at midnight in the waters of the Mississippi. The survivors wandered to and fro for the rest of the year, but by December they were again on the banks of the Mississippi, where they built boats as best they could. Early in the following July, they cast loose their moorings and soon floated in salt water. Working wearily along the Louisiana and Texas coast, a pitiable three hundred and eleven, they reached the Spanish colony at Panuco, near the site of the modern Tampico in Mexico, in September, 1543.

In 1546, determined to hold Florida in some way, Spain undertook a new departure; without soldiers or arms, Father Luis de Barbastro and several Dominican friars entered upon a mission to Florida. They took with them from Havana one Magdalen, an Indian woman, who had been Christianized and a native of the country for which the mission was to be established. But Magdalen seems to have backslidden from the faith and the missionary priests were killed.

By "the right of discovery" of heathen lands by the subjects of a Christian king, Spain claimed Florida and other lands as her own and had the claim confirmed by papal bulls. Settlements were made at St. Augustine, Pensacola, and elsewhere along the Florida coasts, and many zealous missionaries perished while seeking to carry their religion into the interior regions. In 1564, Huguenots began a settlement near the mouth of the St. John's River; the colony was exterminated by Spaniards. After



repaying these atrocities in kind, the French practically withdrew from Florida. After 1702, when Governor Moore, of South Carolina, laid siege to St. Augustine by land and sea, hostilities between the Spanish and British forces along the Florida coasts continued until 1748 when a truce was agreed upon. The war was renewed in 1762 and resulted in the surrender of Florida by Spain to Great Britain in exchange for Cuba which was then held by the British. Soon after the end of the American war for independence Florida was ceded back to Spain. In 1795, Spain sold West Florida to France. In 1811, when war with Great Britain was looming, the United States resolved to seize Florida to prevent the British from taking possession. In 1814, the British occupied Pensacola, but in November of that year the place was captured by an American force under General Andrew Jackson and the British garrison was expelled. In 1819, the whole of Florida was finally sold by Spain to the United States for five million dollars. In 1822, Florida was organized as a territory. In December, 1835, the Seminoles, "a gallant and warlike race," inaugurated hostilities by waylaying Major Francis L. Dade and a detachment of a hundred and ten United States soldiers, while on their way from Fort Brooke at Tampa to Fort King near Ocala. The march led through Pasco County and ended near the town of Bushnell in Sumter County. By feigning death, four of the soldiers survived the massacre. It is now (1923) proposed to commemorate the hopeless struggle by reserving the battlefield as the Dade Massacre Memorial Park. This tragic affair was almost the beginning of a seven years Indian war, but the Seminoles finally surrendered. In 1845, Florida was admitted to the Union as a state.

In 1856, the United States conveyed certain public lands by patent to the state of Florida under act of congress of September 28, 1850.

In February, 1883, the state of Florida sold to the Florida Land Improvement Co. several hundred thousand acres of land located mainly in what are now Pinellas and Pasco counties, at 25 cents per acre. Part of the city of St. Petersburg and almost all of the town of New Port Richey are located on these lands.

In May of the same year, the Florida Land Improvement Co. conveyed part of these lands, including the site of New Port Richey, to A. P. K. Safford.

In this year (1883), A. M. Richey, with his wife and a daughter, then a young high-school girl, but now Mrs. J. O. T. Brown, of Jacksonville, came from St. Joseph, Missouri, and settled near the mouth of the Cotee



River at a place familiarly known as Richey Point. There the family lived eight years—"the most lonesome years of my life," says Mrs. Brown, "for sometimes it was three months at a time that mother and I did not see a woman. Mrs. Malcolm Hill was the other woman in that section, and she lived some distance away. My father owned a schooner, and was given the name of Captain Richey. He also owned the grove on the Dixie Highway, later owned by J. R. Ingram, and later still by the Dignum-Rothera Co. The mail was carried on horseback from Brooksville to Anclote and then to Clearwater. There was no Tarpon Springs. Father got a postoffice established, and gave it the name of Port Richey. He was the first postmaster, and also had a small store on Richey Point. There was, of course, no town of New Port Richey, but this locality was known as Hickory Hammock. Elfers was called Sapling Woods, or The Neck. The first train came into Tarpon Springs in 1888. In 1891 my father moved to Tarpon Springs, as he had serious heart trouble, and wished to be near a physician. He and my mother often drove out to Port Richey, crossing the Cotee River at Sand Hill, near the Tiederman property."

In January, 1885, A. P. K. Safford conveyed his lands to the "Cooty" Land and Improvement Co.

In May, 1897, the "Cooty" Land and Improvement Company conveyed them to Sessions and Bullard, turpentine and timber operators.

In 1905, Sessions and Bullard conveyed them to the Aripeka Saw Mills, a Georgia corporation. The latter concern then began cutting the pine timber off the lands. Railroad trams were run in various directions, and a huge saw mill was built about five miles north-east of New Port Richey, around which grew up the flourishing town of Fivay, so named because the company was owned by five men whose names began with the letter A. These men were Gordon Abbott, Charles F. Ayer, H. M. Atkinson, M. F. Amorous and P. S. Arkwright, residents of Atlanta or Boston, and all wealthy. So the busy little town was known as "Five A's," or Fivay for short. A few years later, when the pine timber began to play out the huge mill was dismantled, the railroad trams were torn up, and, one by one, the inhabitants drifted away to other mill towns, and Fivay soon took on the appearance of a deserted village. In those days, one could buy a fairly good house in Fivay for \$50. Now, only a few rude shanties and weather-beaten shacks remain to mark the site of the once lively town.

In 1911, the Aripeka Saw Mills sold a part of their lands to P. L. Weeks ; in August of that year, Mr. Weeks, his brother (J. S. Weeks, jr.,) and W. E.



Guilford formed the Port Richey Company for the purpose of colonizing and developing the lands. P. L. Weeks, the financial backer of the company, was a successful turpentine operator of Brooksville, Florida; the actual management of the company was entrusted to Mr. Guilford, who had formerly been connected with the Gillett Safety Razor Co., of Boston. The actual beginning of the town of New Port Richey dates from that time, October, 1911, when Mr. Guilford, with characteristic New England foresight and Yankee optimism, drew up a proposed plan for the future city, and had many of the streets and avenues surveyed, but not named. This plan has been followed with very little deviation since that date; therefore, due credit must be given Mr. Guilford, for only a born pioneer could, at that time have conceived the thriving little town of ten years later.

In those days this was good hunting ground, but that was about all. The natives frequently shot bear and deer around the little lake in Orange Circle, then called "Blue Sink." In fact, the point on the river opposite Mr. Clyde Burns's house is to this day known as "Bear Crossing." Few of the old settlers in these parts shared Mr. Guilford's dream of a future metropolis here, and it was generally conceded that the whole thing would soon blow up. But these dire forebodings apparently had little effect on the new-comers, who, by that time, were beginning to trickle in, mainly from New England, Michigan and other northern states—people like the Sassses, Morans, Davises, Stultings, Holzscheiter and others, who, having secured a toe-hold, prepared to stay and have remained ever since.

But the development of New Port Richey was not always in one straight unbroken line. The first few years after 1911 were trying and uncertain ones. Mr. Weeks soon tired of pouring money into a proposition where everything went out, and nothing seemed to be coming in. Mr. Guilford, with cooling ardor and the impatience of all real dreamers, departed for other fields. He had reached first base, but had not made a home run. It required perspiration as well as inspiration to make a real town here.

From the fall of 1912 to the fall of 1913, Mr. B. H. Hermanson, Mr. Robins, Mr. G. M. DeVries and Mr. M. L. Price were successively connected with the enterprise, each full of enthusiasm and doing his best, but, with no capital available, only sporadic attempts at colonizing could be made. Each brought in a few settlers, many of whom would have gone back if they had had enough money to get away.

In January, 1915, Mr. Weeks, the owner of the property, in casting about for someone to relieve him of his load, met Mr. R. E. Filcher and Mr.



George R. Sims, known as the firm of Filcher & Sims, and succeeded in interesting them in the property. But Filcher & Sims were then busy with other developments in Florida, and did not personally become identified with New Port Richey until the early part of 1916, when Mr. Sims, having acquired Mr. Filcher's interest, came here to live, and built his little bungalow overlooking the river and Enchantment Park. (See his "Earliest Recollections of New Port Richey," on another page of this book.)

Since that date, the development of New Port Richey has been steady, substantial and rapid. The first brick building in the town was completed by Mr. Sims in the spring of 1919, and has since been used by him for his central offices. In the fall of 1921, the beautiful and substantial building for the First State Bank of New Port Richey was completed. A few months later, Ralph Werner's two-story brick mercantile building on Main street opened its doors, and was quickly followed by James W. Clark, jr.'s two story brick building extending along the boulevard from Main street to the railway at Nebraska street.

In the same year, the school district of which New Port Richey is a part, voted in favor of the issue of bonds to the amount of \$50,000, of which \$35,000 was for a new high school. The bonds were sold and the school was built, as stated in the article on the public schools of the town. A movement is now on for the incorporation of the village at the next session of the Florida legislature. In 1922, the voters of Pasco County, almost unanimously, authorized the issue of bonds to the extent of half a million dollars for the building of a paved road from Dade City, the county seat, to the Paradise Loop of the Dixie Highway that runs through New Port Richey. It is expected that the road will be finished this year, thus enabling the residents of the eastern side of the county easily to get to the Wonder City and the Gulf of Mexico. A bathing beach on the gulf and the right of way thence to the established highway have been given, and will be dedicated to the public as soon as the village is incorporated. A 150-foot bridge across a bayou has been built with funds contributed by supporters of the project, and the opening of an automobile road to the beach has been begun. The county commissioners appropriated ten thousand dollars for a new bridge to replace the old one over the Cotee River at Port Richey. The bonds were sold, the bridge is finished, and will make more pleasant the drive to the beach. On September 18, 1923, the road district voted, about six to one, in favor of an issue of bonds, \$275,000, for more good roads. The bonds were sold, the contracts have been let, and the work is now in progress.

Having successfully passed through the period of infantile diseases, under the faithful nursing of Commodore Sims, New Port Richey now enters upon a healthy boyhood with every prospect of a robust manhood. So mote it be !



## THE GENESIS OF NEW PORT RICHEY

(To face page 18)

### Addendum

On the 27th of October, 1924, New Port Richey was incorporated as a town under the general statutes of Florida. Officers for the first year were elected as follows:

Mayor, ELROY M. AVERY

Clerk, C. W. BARNETT

Marshal, L. H. MEETH

Councilmen,

W. H. CRITCHLEY

O. W. HERMS

J. H. SHELDON

W. A. LOCKARD

J. H. CASEY

F. A. SHAW

R. DRAFT



## 1912 AND AFTER

By FRED R. SASS

Influenced by the condition of my wife's health and hopes of its improvement, she and I left Kansas City, in Missouri, on the 5th day of January, 1912, by railway, en route to Florida. We left the thermometer at Kansas City registering a temperature of five degrees below zero ( $-5^{\circ}\text{F.}$ ). At Tampa, we were met by one of our friends, Mr. J. G. Holzscheiter, who had been in Florida a few months, looking over the country. After putting up at the Tampa Bay Hotel, Mr. Holzscheiter and I began our study of South Florida from Plant City to St. Petersburg. After about three weeks' search for the Promised Land, we heard of the Port Richey Company, the offices of which were then on Franklin Street, in Tampa. We soon had an interview with the manager of the company, Mr. W. E. Guilford, and he arranged to have us taken to see some of their property at Port Richey, in the western part of Pasco County, on the Pithlachascotee River, and about 36 miles north-west of Tampa. There we found a half-finished hotel that the Port Richey Company was building under the supervision of Mr. S. H. Cornell.

We took a ride down the beautiful river to the gulf in Mr. Dave Clark's boat, were delighted, and quickly arranged to buy the hotel. On the 5th of February, we and our car-load of household goods, groceries, and other necessities and comforts, left Tampa by the unfinished railroad that then came only as far as the present estate of Peter O. Knight, some distance south of Elfers. Thence our goods were carried by truck along a sandy trail that crossed the river over a bridge about where the "Old Grove" sub-division is now being developed by Mr. Warren E. Burns. We at once took possession of the unfinished hotel; we slept on the floor; meals were served in tents that had been set up for the carpenters. Besides Mr. Cornell, we found in what we now call New Port Richey, Mr. W. W. McIntyre and Mr. Frank Howarth, who had been here only a few weeks, and lived on Massachusetts Avenue, where the company had an "experimental farm;" they soon had two or three watermelons growing. Mrs. Sass was the first woman to live in New Port Richey. At that time Orange Lake was not visible from the hotel.

We soon opened a grocery in the hotel pantry. In just a year after our coming, I bought the interest of Mr. Holzscheiter in the hotel. About that time the railway station was built, and, with my horse, I drew freight thence to the river landing (now Enchantment Park) for 25 cents a load.



Thus I was able, in good seasons, to increase my income to eight dollars per month. For several years, hotel prospects were pretty blue. At Tampa, before we bought the hotel property, we were assured that we would have at least 25 guests at the first meal served by us, but we had not that many at any meal until after Mrs. Sass organized the "Port Richey Settlers Benefit Club." The club had monthly dinners (35 cents) at the Sass Hotel, and existed from August 9, 1913, to January 2, 1916. The book of minutes of the club, in the neat handwriting of the secretary, Mr. F. W. Bryan, has been deposited by me with the Avery Library and Historical Society.

In 1916, Mr. George R. Sims arrived, and soon became the owner of the Port Richey Company ; then the town took on new life and activities, until now it is called "The Wonder Town of the Florida West Coast." Late in that year (1916), the Sass Hotel was enlarged and improved. In November, 1920, it was sold to Dr. Elroy M. Avery and Mr. George R. Sims, as equal partners, for \$21,000. They extended Main Street through the property, and soon transferred title to the Enchantment Inn Company. Later the building and part of the land was sold to Miss Hannah A. Turnbolt, who until her death, operated the hotel under the name of The Inn. It is now owned and operated by F. L. Walsh.

After the sale of the Sass Hotel, my wife and I took an automobile trip from New Port Richey to California and back. We traveled more than 13,000 miles, and saw many places of many kinds, but found none that could win our hearts away from The Wonder Town and our New Port Richey friends. And so we came back in September, 1921, to build our present home on the Cotee and the Paradise Loop of the Dixie Highway.

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### A MARVEL

The rapidly growing importance of New Port Richey is well shown by the growth of the First State Bank. Opened on October 15, 1921, the deposits at the close of that first day were \$33,404.22, a showing that surprised everybody. Of course, there were a few joy-killers who confidently prophesied failure before many moons, but Cashier Barnett magnified his office, the bank won the confidence of the people, and today the First State Bank of "The Wonder Town" is rated by Florida bankers as "a marvel." The building and equipment have been paid for, dividends have been satisfactory to the stockholders, the initial surplus has been increased, and a recent statement showed deposits of \$500,767.07.



## EARLY DAYS IN NEW PORT RICHEY

By J. H. MORAN

In the summer of 1911, P. L. Weeks, Caesar Weeks, and W. E. Guilford bought of the Aripeka Saw Mill Company, 30,000 acres of land lying in Townships 24, 25 and 26, south, Range 16, east; later on, 19,000 acres in townships 24 and 25 were sold to the St. Petersburg-Groveland Company; leaving about 11,000 acres in what is now known as the tract of the Port Richey Company, a corporation that was formed in 1911.

A town site was laid out about one mile square, having for its central point what is now known as Orange Lake. A publicity campaign was entered upon by means of a bountiful supply of literature and the opening of offices in various northern cities. The company promptly began the erection of a hotel for the purpose of taking care of their customers. In February, 1912, two men from Kansas City, John G. Holzscheiter and Fred Sass, bought the hotel property. Later, Mr. Holzscheiter retired from the firm; the building was enlarged and, under the name of the Sass Hotel, it enjoyed a large patronage. In 1920, the Enchantment Inn Company became the owners; under the name of The Inn, it is now owned and managed by another.

The importunities of relatives who had bought land through the office at Boston, Mass., caused the writer to leave Boston on April 27, 1912, for Port Richey. I came by rail to Tampa and thence by auto over the old Hudson road, crossing the Cotee River on an old bridge (since destroyed) near where the home of Nick Tiederman now stands. At Port Richey the only buildings in sight were the hotel and two tents, one occupied by S. H. Cornell and C. E. Poole; the other by Frank Hanford who had succeeded W. E. Guilford as manager of the Port Richey Company.

The second building on the townsite was the McNatt building, now known as the Idlewile on Central Avenue. The lower story was used for a store while the upper story contained a hall which was used for occasional meetings of various kinds; and for school and church purposes. These were quickly followed by houses built by J. W. Smith, F. E. Smith and S. H. Cornell; then upon the Circle, others built by R. Draft, J. H. Casey, B. H. Hermanson, and others. Next came the business block on the Boulevard (then called Depot Street), the hardware store, the Pauels building (now occupied by I. N. Vickers) and the Port Richey Company's office which, in spite of the abundance of land, was built in the middle of



Main Street; it was afterwards moved and was occupied by the New Port Richey Press until recently.

F. B. Haworth of Allston, Mass., built the first house on the company's land. Then came W. W. McIntyre, Mrs. Richmond, J. H. Moran, L. L. Percy, S. H. Harrison, and others; all these were east of town. When several houses were built north of the town and more on the west side of the river, we discovered that we were beginning to be a town. Of the persons who were here on my arrival only four remain, S. H. Cornell, J. G. Holzscheiter, F. B. Haworth and Fred Sass, though several others still retain their interests here.

The first social organization was known as the Port Richey Improvement Society which met semi-monthly at Mrs. Richmond's; it had a brief existence and was succeeded by the Settlers' Club, which for several years, met monthly at the Sass Hotel to partake of Mrs. Sass's famous suppers and to while away the evening hours in song and story.

The first religious service was held in the park in the summer of 1913, the Reverend Holmes Logan of Tarpon Springs preaching the sermon. In the fall the service was held in the McNatt building and there continued until the Methodist church was ready for occupancy. After Mr. Logan came Pastors Tompkins, Collier, (during whose ministry the church was built) Windham, Stevens, Partridge, and J. E. Jones. J. M. Mitchell of Elfers was the first superintendent of the Sunday School; his successors were Mrs. Martindale, Mrs. Grove, Mr. Poole, Mr. Valentine, and Mr. Cornell.

P. L. Weeks built the branch railroad line from Lake Villa to Port Richey, a distance of eight miles, and trains ran to Elfers in February, 1912. The depot at New Port Richey was built in November, 1912, but the building of the bridge across the Cotee River delayed the arrival of trains until the summer of 1913, when semi-weekly train service was established. Mr. Weeks afterwards sold this branch to the Tampa and Gulf Coast Railroad. It is now a part of the Seaboard Air Line System. Soon after train service became an assured fact, one of my neighbors remarked to me "That train is a good thing for us, isn't it?" I said, "It sure is; when we hear the locomotive whistle, we know that it is either Tuesday or Friday." Mr. Weeks is now vice-president of the First National Bank of Brooksville. The first station agent at New Port Richey was H. A. Joslyn. After a service of three months, he was succeeded by J. H. Moran who continued in the service until 1920, when he retired from the business.



Before leaving Boston, I had called on the company's agent at that point to discover, if possible, how nearly the actual was in accord with the company's literature. He assured me that "The half had never been told," that we were within 20 miles of Tampa, only 6 miles from Tarpon Springs, that lumber was \$12.00 per M., that land could be cleared for \$8.00 per acre, and that the roads by the land of my people were as good as those past the house in which I lived. So, one bright May morning, we left the Sass Hotel via auto to view the new Eldorado. After riding about two miles over palmetto roots, stumps, and fallen trees (but no road,) we arrived. After about an hour's search, Salesman Robbins discovered the corner stake buried in the palmetto growth. I know that Columbus felt no greater joy when he heard the cry "Land Ho!" than did my friend Robbins when he found that stake. "Here is your land" he cried, "Get out and look at it." "I don't want to get out," I said, "I have seen all I want of it right now." Oh, well, I will change it for you if you don't like it." Said I, "I don't want to change it." "What are you going to do then?" "Going back to Boston and put that agent in jail," was my reply. But I didn't do so, and as far as I know that agent is still at large and I am still a resident of New Port Richey.

Great changes have come to us in these ten years. We have become a prosperous community. Where once the alligator and the razor-back roamed undisturbed, there are orange groves, comfortable homes, schools, churches, and various hives of industry. All credit and honor to those early pioneers who hewed for themselves homes out of the wilderness and made glad the waste places.

Note.—Mr. Moran died in 1922, soon after writing the preceding article.

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### MASONIC

Pearl of the West Lodge F. & A. M. No. 146 meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Snell Hall; 8 p. m. C. A. Tansill, Worshipful Master; John W. Parkes, Secretary.

New Port Richey Chapter Order of the Eastern Star No. 117 meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at Snell Hall; 8 p. m. Mrs. Mary Jane Bailey, Worthy Matron; Henry L. Remling, Secretary.



## NEW PORT RICHEY AS I SAW IT IN 1914

By S. B. DAVIS

Having heard of New Port Richey while living in Zephyrhills, we decided to investigate, and visited the offices of the Port Richey Company, which at that time were located in Tampa. Mr. Robins, who was secretary of the company, brought us out to New Port Richey, arriving at the Sass Hotel a little before noon. The first object of interest which was pointed out to us was "Jack," the big alligator in Orange Lake. After a dinner of good things, which Mrs. Sass knew so well how to prepare, we took a walk through the park to the river, there being a path down the south side. We were delighted with the place at once.

The first man to welcome us was Mr. Cornell, who was on hand looking for a job before we had bought a lot; he later got the job. Mr. Robins then took us through what looked like a jungle to Old Port Richey and back. We looked at a number of lots, walked around the Circle and down towards the river, then picked out the lot where we now live, although we could hardly see it as the brush was so thick. From the Circle to the river was a solid mass of small trees and palmetto, with only a cow path to the river. Where Mr. Sims' house now stands was a regular jungle.

At that time we remained in New Port Richey only one day, but we came back in November of the same year, cut a road to our lot in order to get lumber to the ground, cleared a place for a cottage, and, with Mr. Cornell's help, were living in it within forty-eight hours. There were only eight buildings here at the time. Mr. Moran was here, and Mr. Casey was just moving into his new house on the Circle. Mr. Draft and Mr. Hermanson, also Mr. Stulting and wife, and Mr. and Mrs. DeVries were here. The roads were mostly trails leading almost anywhere through the woods, although Massachusetts avenue had been laid out.

I have seen New Port Richey grow from a jungle of scrub-oaks and saw-palmetto into a beauty spot. Anyone seeing it as I did in the spring of 1914 would not have thought it possible to make it what it is today—one of the beauty spots of Florida.

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## MY EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS OF NEW PORT RICHEY

By GEORGE R. SIMS.

When I located in New Port Richey—in 1916—what we call the hard road was just being completed. There were, to be sure, a few other roads but they were mainly trails winding out through the brush to the homes of Mr. Stulting, Mr. DeVries, Mr. Moran and the other pioneers who had preceded us. The Sass hotel—now The Inn—the hardware store, the railroad depot and the Port Richey Company's office were the only buildings in what is now the central business district. The company's office building faced on the hard road in the middle of where Main Street now is.

From the Sass hotel we could hardly see the houses of Mr. Hermanson, Mr. Draft, and the McNatt store building. The Methodist Church had been started, and the schoolhouse completed, but these buildings were scarcely discernable on account of the heavy growth of oak, pine and palmetto which met the eye in every direction. I marvelled that the good citizens should have located their school so far out of town.

The Circle and Enchantment Park existed only on paper. Everywhere were palmetto and dense scrub, so dense that one could not see ten feet from the road. I could hardly make out Orange Lake from the Sass hotel and, as for the river, one would never know there was a river until reaching a point on the hard road just north of what is now Virginia Avenue, where the brush had been cleared away in order to get rock from the river's bank.

In fact, I did not get my first glimpse of the river until several days after my arrival, being busy at the office of the Port Richey Company; but Mrs. Sims amused herself running a small motor boat up and down the river. We stayed at the hotel. The fare there was very primitive—fried fish caught daily in the river; broiled quail or other game, brought in by some of the guests from the edge of the settlement, which was just beyond the schoolhouse; rice fritters and apple pie such as only Mrs. Sass knows how to make; and thin golden brown wheat cakes, the equal of which I have never been able to secure in any other hotel in America or Europe. Evenings, Fred Sass and I would usually play vingt-et-un with Mr. Moran or a chance salesman.

After a week of this back-to-nature life, Mrs. Sims announced one day that she would like to have a little winter home here. Somewhat startled, as I had for five years been trying in vain to get her interested in various parts of Florida, I inquired where she thought we ought to locate the proposed toy bungalow, and it was right here that we had our first serious disagreement. She favored the site where we now live, but I maintained that that was entirely too far out of town, and that we ought to build on the Circle between Mr. Draft's house and the Sass hotel.



We argued the matter for several days and finally compromised by building the bungalow where she wanted it. Today, six years later, when from my own grounds I can count almost 100 houses in that part of town alone, I often remind her how absurd it was to select a location practically in the heart of a growing city, when we might just as well have been further out where we could have the advantages of country life.

But on one point we always agree—that the past six years, while watching New Port Richey grow from babyhood to youth, have been the happiest years of our lives, and we hope that the next period of growth—from youth to manhood—will prove equally pleasurable.

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### THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

By GERBEN M. DeVRIES

My early life was spent in Michigan. After completing my high school and business college education, I drifted into the southwest. While in the service of the Rock Island Railroad, covering a period of ten years, I lived in the newer portions of Oklahoma and on the Pan Handle of Texas, where a man's standing was largely established and held by a quick and powerful fist. I also worked for the Rock Island Company in Arkansas and Louisiana where a "Yankee" was considered all right in a business way; socially it was rather difficult for a "new-comer" from the North to obtain the confidence of the best people. In my last two years in that country I acquired the real Arkansas brand of malaria. The doctors and the baths at Hot Springs could do nothing for me and my health became very bad. On the advice of a physician, I returned to Michigan. There I got rid of the malaria but, having taken so much calomel and quinine, I found myself a good subject for rheumatism. Finally, I had to return South.

I was so charmed with the south Gulf Coast section of Florida that I decided to remain. To give in detail all the facts relating to the improvement of my health and my reasons for arriving at the decision to make Florida our future home would sound much like a patent medicine advertisement. Briefly stated, outside of the climatic and health conditions, I saw here an opportunity to "make good" even if I was forced to take up a new line of work. This conclusion was largely influenced by the kind of folks I met—a cosmopolitan, friendly, neighborly sort of people who would "stand by" a man or woman who showed the right spirit; on that account I determined to stay and to send for my family.

On the day after Thanksgiving in 1913, I first beheld the enchanting river Pithlachascotee. Here was a place richly endowed by Nature and a band of optimistic and congenial settlers. As they who lived here four centuries ago practiced in their daily lives the virtues of friendship and neighborliness, of harmony and co-operation, so today we find here a peo-



ple of our own race who have come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and are working for the prosperity and happiness of themselves and their families and for the good of the community.

Port Richey then consisted of a store and a postoffice in charge of David Clark who had always lived here. There was a small school building, a few houses near the mouth of the river, and that was about all. New Port Richey was not yet on the map. Where this town now stands, I found a hotel in charge of two very congenial people—Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sass. There also was a "freight and passenger depot" at the end of two rusty 30-pound rails, an unoccupied store building which is now the Idlewile apartment house, Mr. Malmstrom's home on the Circle nearing completion, a beautiful river bank covered with a grove of the finest palm and oak trees I had ever seen, a lot of pretty white stakes marking the location of town lots for sale, and a sand trail as crooked as they make them running from here to Tarpon Springs. I also found a lot of nice people. I wondered where they all lived and, when I asked Mr. Moran, he said, "Oh, I live out there in the woods a ways." Mr. Cornell said he lived "in a big mansion just over that ridge." This "big mansion" is now his poultry house and he and his good wife live in a real home on top of the hill. Mr. Tiedeman showed me where he resided in a house-boat. Some of the residents with whom I first became acquainted are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sass, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Moran, Mr. Frank Grey, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. V. Sheldon, Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Stulting, Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Cornell, Mr. John Holzschelter, Mr. and Mrs. O. W. Herms, Mr. and Mrs. Beck, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Remling, Mr. Tom Hill and family, "Uncle Bob" Nicks and family, Mr. David Clark and family, Mr. B. H. Hermanson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Scudder, Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Leach, Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Miller, Mr. W. McIntyre, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Daso, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Nyman, Mr. and Mrs. S. Neimi, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Beijar, Mr. Karl Olson and family, Mr. Teiderman, Mr. Frank Howarth, Mr. L. C. Draughn and family, and Mr. L. L. Percy and sister. Some of those who settled here shortly afterward are Mr. and Mrs. Rolla Draft, Mr. and Mrs. M. Broersma and family, Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. James H. Casey and daughter, Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Tony DeVries, Mr. Peter DeBoer, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Fluke, Mr. and Mrs. S. Noffsinger, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rowan. There were a few like the Caraway, the Nicks, the Clark, and the Hill families who had always lived here; the rest had come from all parts of the country.

My capital having become badly depleted by my long sickness, my first consideration was to secure employment. The Port Richey Company, a real estate concern owning the land on which was located the townsite of what is now New Port Richey and most of the adjoining land, offered me work which I gladly accepted. My first work was that of a stenographer in their office; later I drove the Ford that carried prospective settlers from Tampa to Port Richey. While with the Port Richey Company, I kept in touch with my friends in Michigan and soon a number of



them became interested in this section. After moving my family from St. Johns, Michigan, in June, 1914, I built a small house on the ridge, two blocks east of Mirror Lake. We camped in those two rooms for four years, and they are now the kitchen, bath-room and bed-room of our present residence, Hillcrest, on Central Boulevard. This 80-foot street was known by us earlier settlers as Michigan avenue, and was so designated on the first maps.

One of our early accomplishments as a community was securing favorable action by the County Board of Education for the establishment of a school, as set forth elsewhere in this work. The playing of the hymn, "Nearer My God to Thee," by Mr. Hermanson on his cornet one Sunday in the summer of 1914 was the inspiration that lead to our first religious service. While the tones of this beautiful hymn were being borne along by the evening breezes, Mrs. DeVries was on her way to call on a neighbor. Arriving at this lady's home, she found her in tears and soon learned that the playing of the hymn reminded her how much she missed the Sunday religious worship of her former home. As Mrs. DeVries also missed the religious services she had been accustomed to hearing on Sunday, she said, "Why grieve over something that we, ourselves, can remedy? We have the beautiful palm grove by the river, God's own temple, and our people would surely enjoy meeting there for religious worship. Let's get busy and arrange it." The next morning, Mrs. DeVries saw several of our settlers and it was arranged. Mr. Draft furnished the necessary lumber and Mr. Joe Smith, Mr. Cornell, and other carpenters built the platform, pulpit and seats under the oaks and palms; that platform for public speaking remains to this day. Notices were posted and word was passed on to Port Richey and to the surrounding settlers. When Sunday came, a horse and wagon was secured and an organ hauled from the home of C. J. Poole. Just as we were ready to begin the services with practically every person in the community, representing many denominations; present, the Rev. Mr. Tompkins, a Methodist Episcopal pastor from Tarpon Springs, drove up and was urged to preach the first sermon, which he did. The Rev. Mr. Keith, a former Baptist minister, who recently resigned as postmaster at Elfers, walked over to New Port Richey to deliver our second sermon. The Hon. J. M. Mitchell was also one of the first to address us. Although we sometimes had flea bites and chigger bites as a result of our services in the out-of-doors temple, it was a beautiful and inspiring place for worship. A Sunday School was soon organized and among the first teachers were Mrs. E. V. Sheldon, Mrs. Will Bragg, C. J. Poole, and Mrs. G. M. DeVries. As the weather became cooler in the fall, the place of meeting was changed to the schoolroom on the second floor in the Idlewild apartments and here the first Christmas tree and exercises were held. Here also were raised the first funds for a church building on the lot given by the Port Richey Company, where the present Methodist church now stands. It was started as a community church, but funds were borrowed from the



M. E. Conference, and it became a Methodist Church, South. From this small beginning have grown our five religious organizations of the present time.

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, there were no real hardships or any sordid living. We had plenty of enjoyment and many good times. If things became a bit monotonous, there would be a fish-fry or a picnic trip to Anclote Island. We made many fishing trips out on the Gulf and to the lakes and ponds, not only for sport, but to get something to eat. One of our methods of catching large mouth bass was to take a long reed pole with a short line baited with pork-rind. Wading out in the shallow ponds and switching this short line among the lily pads was a sure way of getting a good catch. However, this system came very near being disastrous to me—I got a bad case of “muck-itch” and the condition of my feet became very troublesome. Obtaining no relief from home remedies, I decided to see a doctor in Tarpon Springs. A salesman on his way to St. Petersburg, carried me to Tarpon in his flivver over the sand trail. Seeing no chance to catch a ride home I set out afoot and, as my feet were swollen, each step hurt. The sun set soon after I passed Elfers and it was almost dark by the time I approached the river. From Elfers I had taken to the railroad track as it was better walking there than in the sand. As I limped along, I recalled a conversation I had heard that morning about a panther in this section. Having often heard the peculiar cry of the panther in other parts of the country and without thinking of the possible consequences, I gave that cry and repeated it. Immediately there was an answering call from the brush on my right. Realizing that it was a genuine panther scream, a very queer feeling ran up and down my spine. Within a few seconds the creature jumped out of the brush onto the track directly in front of me. There was still enough light to see that it was a full grown animal. No sooner had it landed on the track than it crouched to spring, its long tail lashing the ground. I had no other weapon than a good stout walking stick. Something impelled me to make a jump at the beast with my stick raised to strike. Either my sudden attack or the Apache yell that I gave caused it to turn tail and dash off through the palmetto and I, unmindful of the “muck itch,” dashed for home. That same summer the last black bear was shot in the hammock near Green Branch up the river about two miles from where I frightened the panther.

For food supplies, outside of what we shot in the woods or caught in the river and lakes, we depended on the pantry in the Sass hotel and the postoffice store at Port Richey. Other than a path along the river there was no direct road between our settlement and Port Richey, so we generally went down the river by boat for our mail and provisions. Much of the time I carried the mail on my back for the Port Richey Company and the settlers. In the spring of 1915, I circulated a petition among the residents asking for the establishment of a post office. On recommendation of the Port Richey Company and my friends, I also circulated another



petition that I be appointed Post Master. These petitions were favorably considered and the post office was established here under the name of New Port Richey, Florida. My commission as post master was received in August, 1915. My work with the Port Richey Company had come to an end and I had no place in which to put the post office. Messrs. Herman-son and Draft came to the rescue and offered space in their hardware store. The first post office fixtures consisted of a dry goods box divided into compartments. This dry goods box, a rough work table, and my work room took up about forty-eight square feet.

With the post office on my hands and no other source of income, I found myself in a predicament. My compensation at first was less than \$25 per month. Again the settlers showed the stuff of which they are made. They suggested that I secure a commission as notary public and a fire insurance agency and handle the same in connection with the post office. They promised to give me their business, speaking not only for themselves, but for the town. It was difficult to convince insurance companies of the advisability of establishing an agency in this community. Company after company turned me down, but I finally secured the agency for two companies. The first property insured here by this agency was what is now the Pfaff home.

New settlers kept coming in; homes and business places were going up, the hard road was completed to Aripeka; and, in spite of the European war, there were good prospects that our town would continue to develop. My wife and I appreciated the wisdom of our having located here, but we needed more money than we were earning and felt that we should move to Tampa where I could secure better wages. It was hard to tell what was best to do. We studied the matter from every angle and had about decided to go. But in the lives of all come times when it seems that God takes charge and directs our action in spite of preconceived plans. One day, while showing some "prospects" over the land, I was in a very despondent mood thinking that we were about to leave this place, and I decided to ask God what was best to do. Almost immediately, I heard a commotion overhead and, looking up, beheld an eagle fighting a hawk that held a fish in its talons. The hawk was forced to give up its prey and the fish fell at my feet—a three-quarter pound mullet. Realizing that this fish brought by the birds was an answer to my prayer and that the Lord would direct us, I picked it up and carried it home. We prepared this token from the sky and ate it, not so much for its food value as an expression of our faith that somehow everything would work out to our good and that God would help us if we remained. We have had some difficult times and trouble since but, almost immediately on reaching our decision to stay, events began to shape themselves more to our advantage.

In order better to advertise New Port Richey, to help build up a winter tourist business, and to co-operate with new-comers, a board of trade was organized during the winter of 1915-1916. Mr. John G. Holzscheiter was



its first president and I was the secretary. This body was instrumental in bringing much favorable attention to the town. We also secured the recognition of the various state and national good-roads associations which finally resulted in this highway being made a part of the state road system.

New Port Richey, having successfully passed through the period of infancy and growth, we now enter upon a new and greater era, for in the prophetic words of the dying Indian chief, Mucoschee, given back in the seventeenth century, "When even the memory of this people (the Calusas) is forgotten, the Great Spirit shall give this land to another—a strange people made up of every tongue, yet speaking the same language—from the east and the west, from the north and the south, they shall come, and they shall possess the land and on this river of beauty and enchantment they shall dwell in numbers greater than the number of the palm leaves that rustle on the evening breeze the river's winding length, even from the Trident Palm to the Altar of Toya by the sea. And they shall remain here always in peace and happiness, for they shall know the Great Spirit."

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First State Bank of New Port Richey, Opened October 15th, 1921

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### CHURCHES

Community Church.—The Rev. O. H. Denny.

Church of Our Lady, Queen of Peace.—Father Felix, O. S. B.

Baptist Church.—The Rev. B. M. Pack; services in Snell Hall.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South.—The Rev. W. R. Howell.



## OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL

By DORIS WRIGHT

The first public school in New Port Richey was opened in 1914. Before that time, the children of New Port Richey had been going to school at Port Richey. The road then used was what is now Madison Street, running north through the townsite, crossing Massachusetts Avenue and continuing north through the Hill farm. The deep sand and the long, round-about way made it very difficult for the children to attend school regularly.

At this time, the school board could not provide a suitable school house for New Port Richey. To make it more convenient for the pupils, it was decided to rent rooms for the school until such time as the school board could build a school house. Therefore, the house on Central Avenue, now known as the Idlewyle, was rented; the upper story became the home of the first school in New Port Richey. Miss Corrine Tate of Dade City was the teacher. About the middle of the year, Miss Minnie Jones became assistant to Miss Tate. Their pupils numbered about thirty.

In the summer of 1915, the Board of Public Instruction of Pasco County let the contract for building the first public school-house in New Port Richey. It was located on Main Street at the corner of Madison, where it still stands. It was completed in time for the beginning of the school year, 1915-1916. The school year generally begins in September. Miss Julia Harn was the teacher and Miss Eva McKeathen was her assistant. The pupils numbered about thirty.

In the fall of 1916, Mrs. Brummette became principal with Miss Knight as assistant. The principal resigned in December and was succeeded by Miss Johnnie Davis who remained until the end of the school year.

In 1917-1918, Mrs. Brummette opened the school as principal with Mr. Frank Ingram as assistant, and with about thirty-five pupils, of whom seven were graduated from the common-school grades, viz., Amorita DeVries, Alberta Von Vorhist, Donald Booth, Olaf Ericson, Rhea Leach, Helen Rieder., and Emma Loyce Ingram. The nearest high school for them was at Tarpon Springs, eight or nine miles away.

The year 1918-1919 was opened with Miss Louisa Leach as principal and Miss Laura Van Poucke as assistant. They had about sixty pupils, of whom Reginald Sims, Charles Lentz, and James Burns were graduated.

The next year, 1919-1920, was made memorable by troubles within the school and litigation without. The school was opened in the fall of 1919 with Mr. C. W. Martin as principal and Miss O'Berry as assistant, both of whom soon resigned. Then Mrs. George Wanner became principal with Mrs. Oren and Mrs. Lapham as assistants. In a few weeks, these three resigned their positions and for the next few weeks the school was in the



sole care of Mr. William Lightfoot, after which the year was completed with Mrs. Rachel Kirkman as principal and Miss Bessie Goodman and Mrs. Anice Rosebrough as assistants. There were about seventy pupils and Marguerite Arens, Margaret Albritton, John Casson, and David Dowling were graduated. The year was further marked by an effort of the Board of Public Instruction to unite the schools at Port Richey and New Port Richey in a new building for which a 5-acre tract on the Rock Road, some distance north of Massachusetts Avenue, had been bought by the Board. This attempt to make most of the New Port Richey children go so far beyond the center of population was strenuously opposed by most of the citizens of the new town and litigation followed. In the end, the 5-acre tract was sold and the Port Richey school was consolidated with the larger school at New Port Richey.

The school year 1920-1921 was begun with Miss Ruth Davis as principal, and with Mrs. Cripe and Mrs. C. A. Tansill as assistants. In January, Miss Davis was succeeded as principal by Mr. Carl Cripe. The enrolment of pupils was about one hundred and fifteen. As had been the case in some previous years, the Board of Public Instruction had not sufficient funds to maintain the schools for the full school year and the New Port Richey citizens were called upon in public meeting at Snell Hall to subscribe money needed for the purpose. A total of four hundred dollars was secured and the schools were kept open until the last Friday in May, when Doris Miles, Fern Brake, Marion Good, Edric Higgins, Mary Clark, Viola Ericson, Gertrude Stevenson, Ione Copeland, Doris Wright, Wharaust Rothera, Walter Beijar and Wilfred Bailey were graduated.

The school term of 1921-1922 was opened with Mr. Cripe as principal and Mrs. Cripe, Mrs. Albritton, and Mrs. Tansill as assistants. The enrollment of pupils was about one hundred and fifteen. About the middle of the term, a diptheria epidemic broke out and it became necessary to close the school for the month of January. When school re-opened, only three teachers were required, and Mrs. Albritton retired. The school board did not have sufficient funds to maintain the schools for the full term, so we had "subscription school" as had been done before. School closed April 28. The graduates were Barbara Burns, Willa Golder, Walter Casson, and John Beijar.

School opened for the term of 1922-1923 with Mr. Cripe as principal and Miss Pinholster, Mrs. Albritton, and Mrs. Cripe as assistants. The enrollment was one hundred and twenty. The seventh and eighth grades had been transferred to the Gulf High School building.

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The year 1923-1924 was one of almost universal dissatisfaction that resulted in arousing the Parents and Teachers Club and the voters of New Port Richey. The principal was a very young man who had never before taught school. Naturally, school discipline was lax or wanting and instruction unsatisfactory. At the end of the school year, a change was demanded and secured.

For the year 1924-1925, the school was put in the charge of Mrs. C. A. Tansill, as principal, with Miss Bessie Bayless and Mrs. Cynthia Albritton as her assistants.—The Editor.



## THE GULF HIGH SCHOOL

By EDWIN S. DEW

The Gulf High School came into being on the 18th day of September, 1922. The auditorium of the new \$40,000 building on the south bank of the Cotee River not being then completed, the opening exercises were held in the Community church. Forty pupils were enrolled in the first three grades of high school during the first week and several were added later.

Three rooms were equipped in the new building and Principal McBeath lost no time in organizing classes which began work immediately. Although hampered by the lack of special equipment and the disturbance incident to the completion of the building, very creditable work was done from the beginning. Pupils from thirteen states were enrolled.

The foremost school organization was the Avery Literary Society, which held regular meetings every other Friday afternoon. Debates, plays, dialogues, recitations, readings, essays, and impromptu addresses were among the numbers appearing on the programs. Public entertainments were not possible during the first semester owing to the fact that the auditorium was not seated and the electric lights not installed.

Class organizations were maintained in each class in school. A student's athletic association was organized and the boys were enabled to play several games of baseball—thanks to Dr. Avery for the gift of a complete baseball outfit, but no other athletics were attempted because of the lack of funds for equipment and preparation of grounds.

The girls organized a domestic science class under the supervision of Mrs. Harriet Ticknor, County Home Demonstration Agent, and made splendid headway in equipping a room for their club, money being raised by giving a pillau.

Early in the year a school paper, "Gulf-Hi-Life," was begun under the supervision of the faculty with Marion Bowman of '24 and Doris Wright '25 as editor and associate editor respectively. Gulf-Hi-Life was well received and proved valuable in developing school spirit among the pupils and maintaining general interest in the school affairs among the public.

Some of the boys placed between the building and the highway, a flag-pole from which floats, in "business hours," a fine U. S. flag—the gift of Dr. Avery.

The faculty was as follows: T. J. McBeath, principal; Edwin S. Dew, English and History; Miss Mabel Waring, Latin and Science. Miss Waring resigned at Christmas and Miss Kate Caplinger took her place.

Editorial Note.—In 1923-1924, Edwin S. Dew was principal with Mr. J. H. St. Clair, Miss Mary Bohman, Miss Maude Fant, and Miss Anna Ley as assistants.

For the year 1924-1925, the appointments are Albert Covert, principal, J. H. St. Clair, Miss Elizabeth Humphries, Miss Vivia Craig, and Miss Lucinda Allen as assistants.



## LAST BUT NOT LEAST

In the opening chapter of this little book, mention was made of the Richey family from whom the settlements on the Cotee took their names. But Captain Richey was not the first to build his cabin here; he came in 1883. James W. Clark, Sr., was born in Colleton County in South Carolina, September 29th, 1838. He entered the Confederate army in 1861 and, for the momentous four years, served in Lee's army in Virginia. In 1871, he moved to Brooksville, Florida, where in 1872, he married Fannie L. Hope of that town. In 1874, the couple moved to the banks of the Pithlachascotee River and established a home in what is now Port Richey, where the Bay Lea hotel stands. There were born five children, all of whom are living, namely, Mrs. F. S. Liles of Tarpon Springs; David H. Clark of Port Richey, one of our county commissioners; James W. Clark, Jr., of New Port Richey, chief of our fire department; Mrs. Oscar W. Herms of Port Richey; and Victor M. Clark of Live Oak, Florida. The father of the family died at Tarpon Springs, July 21, 1913.

Malcolm M. Hill, a native of Florida, came hither at about the time that James W. Clark, Sr., came. With him came his wife, whose maiden name was Emma E. Hancock. They made their home on what is now the Casson property on Massachusetts avenue. They had six children, one of whom, George, is dead. The others, Thomas J., John T., Clarence M., Carrie E., and Alice (now Mrs. Henry Nicks) are living. Mr. Malcolm Hill now lives at Tarpon Springs.

Mr. Robert Nicks (better known as Bob) was born in Leon County, Florida, about 71 years ago. He subsequently lived at Spring Lake, in Hernando County, about eight miles from Brooksville. He settled at Port Richey on the Cotee River in 1904 and, as a large property owner, has lived there ever since. He married Latha Hope; of his 7 children, 4 are now living, namely; Henry, Mike, Frances (now Mrs. Hancock of Miami), and Lonnie (now Mrs. Victor M. Clark of Live Oak.) Every one residing in the Cotee Valley knows of "Bob" Nicks, except those who arrived yesterday.

Some of the others who came hither in 1915 or earlier, are W. N. Hargraves, B. H. Hermanson, and W. M. McIntyre, in 1911; Frank B. Haworth, Emil Nyman, August Olson, Ralph Werner, and Dan Wesa, in 1912; Frank I. Grey, Simon Noffsinger, Karl O. Olson, Cornelius J. Stulting, James A. Swallow, Gerben DeVries, and August Wick, in 1913; Fred LaFrance, Anthony J. Pauels, Henry C. Remling, and F. N. Tiedeman, in 1914; M. Broersma, H. H. Havens, W. K. Jahn, Henry Kamuren, F. S. Salisbury, Harry E. Northrup, Fred Rowan, Mrs. Fred Rowan (for distinguished service), and J. Henry Sheldon, in 1915. Of course, the list is not complete.



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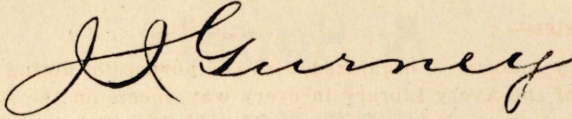
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